

CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) A system for reporting information regarding use of one or more software products from one or more client devices to at least one server, comprising:

a report user interface;

one or more sets of report user interface definition files residing on each of the one or more client devices, wherein a set of report user interface definition files customizes the report user interface for collecting report information regarding a particular software product; and

a problem-reporting client configured to construct the report user interface without requiring an initial connection to the at least one server, the report user interface based on the one or more sets of report user interface definition files; for collecting report information; and for providing report information to the at least one server;

wherein the problem-reporting client is configured to, in response to a user of a particular client device entering information on a topic relating to the software product to the report user interface, load an additional report user interface definition file for collecting additional information on the topic, and to dynamically reconfigure the report user interface to collect the additional information on the topic based on the additional report user interface definition file without communicating with the at least one server while reconfiguring.

2. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein the report user interface facilitates reporting information regarding a problem encountered by a software user.

3. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 1, further comprising:

a report file generated by the problem-reporting client, wherein the report file is generated based on information entered by way of the report user interface.

4. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 3, further comprising:

at least one server to which the report file is transmitted by the problem-reporting client.

5. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 3, wherein the problem-reporting client collects report information and generates the report file without requiring a connection to the at least one server.
6. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 3, further comprising:
a report package generated by the problem-reporting client, wherein the report package contains the report file and additional report information.
7. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 6, wherein the report package comprises a cabinet file.
8. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 6, wherein the additional report information includes hardware information for the particular client device operated by a software user.
9. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 6, wherein the additional report information includes additional files as designated in the set of report user interface definition files.
10. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 6, wherein the additional report information includes files designated by a user of the particular client device.
11. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein the one or more sets of files comprise one or more text files formatted in accordance with a markup language.
12. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 11, wherein the one or more text files are formatted in accordance with Extensible Markup Language (XML).
13. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 12, wherein the client comprises an XML control parser.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein a set of report user interface definition files comprises:

a report parent file; and

one or more additional report user interface definition files, wherein each additional report user interface definition file corresponds to a child screen in the report user interface.

16. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 1, further comprising a user authentication component for obtaining identification credentials of a user of the particular software product.

17. (Previously presented) A method for obtaining information regarding use of a software product, the method comprising:

obtaining information reported by a user of the software product from a client device by way of a problem-reporting client and one or more report user interface definition files, wherein the report user interface definition files specify a user interface customized with respect to the software product and presented by the problem-reporting client

without requiring an initial connection to a server, and wherein the problem-reporting client is configured to, in response to a user of a particular client device entering information on a topic relating to the software product to the report user interface, load an additional report user interface definition file, for collecting additional information on the topic, and to dynamically reconfigure the report user interface to collect the additional information on the topic based on the additional report user interface definition file without communicating with a server while reconfiguring;

providing the obtained information to a server; and

receiving one or more modified report user interface definition files based on the information reported by the user.

18. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 17, further comprising generating a report file based on information obtained by way of the report user interface without requiring a connection to a server.

19. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 17, further comprising generating a report package containing the report file and additional report information.

20. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the additional report information includes any files as designated in the set of report user interface definition files.

21.-35. (Canceled)

36. (Previously presented) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for implementing a method for obtaining information regarding use of a software product, the method comprising:

obtaining information reported by a user of the software product from a client device by way of a problem-reporting client and one or more report user interface definition files, wherein the report user interface definition files specify a user interface customized with respect to the software product and presented by the problem-reporting client without requiring an initial connection to a server, and wherein the problem-reporting client is configured to, in response to a user of a particular client device entering information on a topic relating to the software product to the report user interface, load an additional report user interface definition file for collecting additional information on the topic, and to dynamically reconfigure the report user interface to collect the additional information on the topic based on the additional report user interface definition file without communicating with a server while reconfiguring;

providing the obtained information to a server; and

receiving one or more modified report user interface definition files based on the information reported by the user.

37-41. (Canceled)

42. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 5, wherein the problem-reporting client is configured to save the report file in incomplete form in a first session and to provide access to the report file in a later session to facilitate completion of the report file before transmitting the report file to the at least one server.

43. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein the problem-reporting client generates a report file based on information entered by way of the report user interface.

44. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 43, wherein the problem-reporting client generates a report package containing the report file and additional report information.

45. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 44, further comprising a file gathering component for collecting any files designated in the set of report user interface definition files for inclusion in the report package, and wherein the additional report information packaged by the problem-reporting client comprises the files designated in the set of report user interface definition files.

46. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 44, further comprising a file gathering component for collecting any files designated by a user of the particular client device for inclusion in the report package, and wherein the additional report information packaged by the problem-reporting client comprises the files designated by the user.

47. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 45, wherein the file gathering component also collects any files designated by a user of the particular client device for inclusion in the report package, and wherein the additional report information packaged by the problem-reporting client comprises the files designated by the user.

48. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 44, further comprising a hardware information gathering component for extracting information concerning the configuration of the particular client device, and wherein the additional report information packaged by the problem-reporting client comprises the hardware information.

49. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 47, further comprising a hardware information gathering component for extracting information concerning the configuration of the particular client device, and wherein the additional report information packaged by the problem-reporting client comprises the hardware information.